

How Can a Good God Allow Suffering?
For the week of April 28, 2024

Reflection

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?

2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

An article from the C.S. Lewis Institute, by William L. Kynes begins with...

"Why would a good God allow so much suffering? This is a question we all ask at some point in our lives. I believe it's the chief obstacle to faith. We all suffer. Our bodies are frail, they will fail us, and we will die. And until we do, we all hover over a pit of tragedy, every single day. A mass shooting kills dozens. A drunk driver kills a whole family. A sudden tornado destroys a whole town. An earthquake rocks a nation. What sort of world is this?"

The case against God can be very strong indeed. In philosophical terms, it can be stated like this: Premise one: A God who is all-powerful would be able to prevent evil in the world. Premise two: A God who is all-good would want to prevent evil in the world. Three: Evil exists in the world. This results in a logical conclusion: Therefore, an all-powerful, all-good God cannot exist. That seems a pretty airtight syllogism, doesn't it?"

3. How do you respond to such a thing?

4. How was this addressed in the Sunday sermon?

"According to the Bible, neither humankind nor the world was made in a state corrupted by evil. God created all things and called them "very good." God also provided in abundance for everything that Adam and Eve, creatures made in His image, could ever need. As creatures made in God's image, they were endowed with moral ability, the freedom to choose between good (adhering to God's will) and evil (violating God's will). How long this good state lasted is unknown, but at some point Adam and Eve freely disobeyed God by violating God's one commandment (which was designed to preserve and perpetuate the good state of the world).

Thus, evil was introduced into the world by the free choice of morally accountable creatures. God made evil possible, but people made evil actual.¹”

“The source of goodness is not arbitrary or based on moods or preferences that can change. Nor is the standard for goodness a law outside of God. Goodness finds its source in God's character, and the standard of goodness is God's character itself. Things are not good just because God says they are; they are good because they correspond to His perfectly good character. God's intentions and purposes are strictly informed by His character. The degree to which something does not correspond to God's omnibenevolent character is the degree to which that thing is evil.

The point is that to say something is evil is to say that there is an objective, transcendent, personal being whose will is being violated or whose order is being disturbed. In short, to say something is evil is to claim there is a God. In fact, the existence of evil is one of the most powerful evidences for God. Without the existence of God, the idea of evil becomes unintelligible. As a result, the problem of evil is not a problem for the Christian. Rather, the problem of evil is a problem for unbelievers.²”

5. What is suffering?

6. How did suffering enter the world? (see Gen 3:1-7; Rom 5:12)

7. Was there suffering before the fall?

8. How many times is a form of suffering (see also afflict or affliction) referred to in both the Old and New Testaments? (Look in the concordance of your Bible)

9. Is God oblivious to suffering or has He experienced suffering? If so, how?

¹ Doug Powell, [Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006), 340.

² Doug Powell, [Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006), 347–348.

10. Before asking how can God allow suffering, shouldn't the question be how can I allow suffering?

Am I completely honorable in my thought life?

Am I completely truthful with my words?

Am I generous with my abundance?

Am I completely selfless – avoid hurting others in any way?

Further Resources to Read and Watch:

How Can a Good God Allow Suffering?: A Biblical Perspective – D.A. Carson

www.thegospelcoalition.org/sermon/how-can-a-good-god-allow-suffering/

Video: The Supremacy of Christ and Truth in a Postmodern World – Voddie Baucham

www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj_nSyh0HOI

Why Does God Allow Suffering? – cru

www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/life-and-relationships/hardships/why-does-god-allow-suffering.html